



Robinson Jeffers

NEWSLETTER

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by Mabel Dodge Luhan

COVER PHOTO:

Tony Luhan, Robinson Jeffers and the twins at Taos, New Mexico.
Far more information on the photographs in this issue, see News & Notes.

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NEWS & NOTES

- The cover photograph and others in this issue are from CSULB archives. Many were acquired in the early 1970s from a Los Angeles bookseller who had approached Una Jeffers' sister, Daisy Bartley, of Mason, Michigan, and found a treasure trove of snapshots and other photos which had been included in family letters over the years. The cover photo shows Jeffers and the twins with Tony Luhan, husband of Mabel Dodge Luhan (whose remembrance "Una and Robin" is featured in this issue), in Taos, New Mexico in about 1930.
- Besides the reported three-part panel on Jeffers at the Western Literature Association's 1991 Conference in Estes Park, Colorado, October 3 to 5 (RJN No. 80, page 3), four other related papers were also read: "American Margins: Toward an Application of Ecological Literary Criticism" by Michael McDowell (with a focus on "Steinbeck and Jeffers" by Robert DeMott, "Robinson Jeffers and *Night*: The Poem's Scientific Background" by Whitney Hoth, and "God-Thinking in Robinson Jeffers and Carl Jung" by Charles Daughaday.
- The full text of Jeffers' "Pearl Harbor" was featured in the Los Angeles Times Book Review, Sunday, December 8, page 6. A note identified it as taken from *Articles of War*, edited by Leon Stokesbury, introduction by Paul Fussell (University of Arkansas Press: \$24.95 and \$12.95, 256 pages). Jeffers is described as "one of the few poets to oppose the U.S.' entrance into World War II "The poem originally was published in *The Double Axe & Other Poems* (1948), one section appearing in *New Poems*, 1944.

- The Tor House Foundation has received several copies of *The Dark Glory: Robinson Jeffers and His Philosophy of Earth, Time and Things* by Tadeusz Slawek (Katowice: Uniwersytet Slaski, 1990). More information and a review will appear in a subsequent RJN.
- *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, Volume III, received a thoughtful and provocative review by C.J. Fox in the *British PN Review* (November/December), page 57.
- Bobbe B. Jeffers, widow of Jeffers' younger brother, Hamilton, passed away on November 19. A native of Omaha, Nebraska, she was a longtime resident of Carmel, living on cliff-edge in Carmel Highlands, directly opposite the home of Ansel Adams. She had worked as a secretary at Lick Observatory where Hamilton fulfilled much of his career as an astronomer. They were married in 1950. Hamilton died in 1976.
- *Dissertation in progress*: Kirk Glaser, "Journeys into the Border Country: The Making of Home in the Poetry of Robinson Jeffers and Mary Oliver." University of California, Berkeley.
- A query: Dr. Jane M. Babb is finishing a critical anthology, *Literature and Photography: Interactions, 1840-1990*, to be published by University of New Mexico Press in 1993, including materials about Jeffers and Edward Weston and probably featuring Jeffers' preface to Weston's *Fifty Photographs* (1947). She asks for information on another reported tribute to Weston by Jeffers, appearing in a Carmel paper in about 1934.
- *Corrigendum*: The American Literature Association Conference, reported on page 13 of RJN No. 80, will be held in San Diego May 28-31, 1992 (not 1993). The newly formed Robinson Jeffers Association will sponsor two panels, according to Professor Terry Beers of the English Department of Santa Clara University.
- The Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation, created to preserve the poet's architecturally unique home, provides tours, sponsors poetry festivals, and fosters interest in the poet both locally and nationally. Along with membership, it offers an informative Tor House Newsletter four or five times a year, featuring information on festivals, local readings and cultural events, tributes, photographs, short memoirs, docents' anecdotes, and notices of publications on Jeffers. Tor House Foundation, P.O.

Box 1887, Carmel, CA 93921. Membership \$25. Students and Senior Citizens \$15.

- Now available from University of Delaware Press: *Centennial Essays for Robinson Jeffers*, edited by Robert Zaller. The first printing has an error (duplication of page 68 on page 85 instead of the first page of Tim Hunt's article, "The Problematic Nature of Tamar and Other Poems").
- The RJN is indexed in literary Criticism Register, monthly listing of studies in English and American literature found in 300 scholarly journals, and in books and dissertations. Editor and publisher: Sims D. Kline (P.O. Box 2086, Deland, FL 32721).
- The text to *Songs and Heroes* (1988), 23 early unpublished poems of Jeffers from the era of *Flagons and Apples*, can so far be obtained only through a limited fine edition (200 copies: \$165; 50 copies: \$245; Arundel Press, 8380 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048). Because of the consequent difficulty of access by scholars, a photocopy of the text will be provided by the book's editor. Write: Robert Brophy, English Department, California State University, Long Beach, CA 90840. •

IN MEMORIAM

- Dame Judith Anderson, Australian-born actress, who made Robinson Jeffers renowned through her characterization of Medea in the 1940s and 1950s, died Friday, January 3, at the age of 93.

She will be remembered for her portrayal of Lady Macbeth, Gertrude in *Hamlet*, Mrs. Danvers in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, Memnet in Cecil B. DeMille's *Ten Commandments*, and Big Mama in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. She played opposite William Gillette, Lawrence Olivier, John Gielgud, Errol Flynn, Raymond Massey, and Tyrone Power. Her roles ranged widely -from the title role in *Hamlet* to a Sioux squaw in *A Man Called Horse* and the matriarch in TV's soap, *Santa Barbara*.

She met Robinson Jeffers through her first husband, Benjamin Lehman, Chair of the English Department, U.C. Berkeley. In 1941, at Carmel's Forest Theatre, she played Clytemnestra in Jeffers' *The Tower Beyond the Tragedy*, a drama which in the 1950s she took to Broadway for ANTA. Though the viewing public disagreed, she often said she valued this play above *Medea*. To Jeffers' aficionados she made her final triumph as the nurse in the Kennedy Center's *Medea*, opposite Zoe Caldwell as Medea

In 1960 she was named a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II at an investiture in Buckingham Palace.

Dame Judith Anderson spent her final years in Carpenteria and Montecito, California, both just south of Santa Barbara. Among her memories was Jeffers' visit to her home after Una died. She recalled that his first act there was to replant a cypress, carried from Carmel, in a place he selected for it in her garden.

We will sorely miss Dame Judith's dedication, her enspirited readings, and her abounding enthusiasm for and love of the poet.

MABEL, UNA AND ROBIN: A NOTE

■ The most voluminous correspondence from the Jeffers family to anyone is found in Yale University's Beinecke Library among the papers of Mabel Dodge Luhan: Una Jeffers' outpourings on family life, mutual acquaintances, local news, current reading, opinions on art, politics and personal values, advice and affection for a friend, and personal unburdening.

The life of Mabel Ganson Evans Dodge Sterne Luhan must be garnered elsewhere. A woman of immense ambition and will- to-power, she presided over three salons of twentieth century "movers and shakers" (title to the second volume of her memoirs) -in Florence, Italy, New York's Greenwich Village, and finally in Taos, New Mexico.

To Taos she drew D.H. Lawrence in the 1920s, intending that he immortalize the primitive, vital setting and capture the Indian culture which she had adopted (along with an Indian consort from the pueblo), hoping thereby to give soul to what she saw as a vastly anemic American national life. Lawrence failed her, leaving definitively for Europe in 1925 and dying in France five years later. Serendipitously, while in Carmel working on her memoirs in 1930, Mabel found an equally powerful writer, attuned to the primitive mana of his own landscape and haunted by the ghosts of indigenous tribes less fortunate than those of Taos. In her book on *Lawrence Lorenzo in Taos* (1932), written in epistolary form to Jeffers, she would conclude:

Well Jeffers, that is all I have to tell you about Lawrence in Taos. I called him there, but he did not do what I called him to do. He did another thing. Perhaps you are the one who will (I, after a (I, do what I wanted him to do: give a voice to this speechless land.

By engaging Jeffers' sons with expectations of adventure and his wife with excitements of a larger cultural world and warm friendship, Mabel enticed the hermetic poet to her land summer after summer. Except for three trips to Ireland, the Taos sojourns were the only exceptions to a life of fiercely guarded privacy and seclusion. If Una was enthralled with Mabel's challenging and entertaining personality, Mabel seems truly taken by the Jeffers family as her vignette attests.

Later the Mabel-connection was to take a near tragic turn. In 1913, Jeffers was suffering from a period of poetic aridity. Mabel, whether for malice or out of misdirected psychological meddling intended to stir his creative wellsprings, evidently decided an affair with a university press editor's wife could be encouraged. Una saw in the infidelity no mere sexual betrayal but a denial of her life role as nurturer of the poet and social facilitator. She survived an attempted suicide only by the freak deflection of a bullet. But that too is another story.

Una and Robin which follows was penned in the early years of the Luhan-Jeffers acquaintance. It is unabashed admiration, almost adulation. The manuscript in its various versions is referred to repeatedly in the Una-Mabel correspondence which the RJN has featured since issue No. 77. Una evidently accepted it with some enthusiasm. She writes:

You've got here again that vivid immediate freshness of your Taos book. Out of such scattered bits you get such a living whole. Perhaps I ought to say that my portrait is too interesting - anyway, this is the first time Robin has been got at- the real Robin is here. And you feel the living quality of Tor House which can't help coming out of our intense concentration on it.

However, Una received strong warnings against publication from friends and resisted Mabel's pleas for go-ahead approval, repeated at intervals throughout the 1930s.

The present text is taken from the first and only appearance of *Una and Robin* - published as a keepsake by Friends of the Bancroft Library in 1976, edited by Mark Schorer from a typescript dated "Carmel, January 1933." In his own "Note," Schorer asserts that the text, housed in Berkeley's Jeffers collection, differs insignificantly from what is evidently the final version at Yale. The RJN acknowledges gracious permissions from Friends of the Bancroft Library and from Yale University as Assignee by Agreement with John Evans as Legatee under the will of Mabel Dodge Luhan.

UNA AND ROBIN

*By Mabel Dodge Luhan
Camel, January 1933*

...Oh, fortunate earth; you must find someone
To make you bitter music; how else will you take bonds
of the future, against the wolf in men's hearts?

- "This morning I woke up with such a dreary thought, Una," I said.
"I lay there in my bed and looked out at the sea, and everything seemed to be so active, so going-on-of-its-own-accord! The water was so blue and happy looking; everything moved and twinkled in the sunshine; those sand-birds twinkled up and down the beach on their little roller skates, like you twinkle around, Una; and the gulls swooped in the white-haired, wind-blown spray-everything so gay and full of happening. And I knew that unless I did something about it, nothing would happen to me. I could just lie there. Unless I managed it, no breakfast would come in to me: absolutely nothing would happen that I hadn't made to happen, and anything I wanted, I'd have to go and get."
"I know it! It's an awful thought, really!"
"And it's always been so and always will!"
"I know it! It's just like that in my house. I have to make everything move. But Robin doesn't care if nothing happens to him. He doesn't want anything to happen. He hates to have anything happen. I can't go away a day and leave him unless the boys are there. He just sinks down into nothing."
"Goes below the surface, I suppose."
"I suppose so. Lies on the bed and looks out of the window." "But Una, he loves to hear you tell about happenings...."
"Oh, yes; he likes to hear about things. I always tell him every single thing I hear. That's where he gets all those stories. They sink into him and

come out years later! He gestates as slowly as an elephant!"

Una's graven image smiled his slow, beautiful smile. His long, seacolored eyes drooped at the outer comers - the only droop in his face. "Una likes to make things happen," he said, in his low, kind voice: "Yes, I guess I do," she admitted, twinkling her creamy face and flashing deep blue eyes around her. "It's lucky, isn't it?"

"I should say so," I exclaimed. "I hate to, but I hate it worse if they don't: I mean if everything in and all round me is static, immobile, inactive!"

"Oh, I like to cope with things. I love all my housework, all the washing and things. Robin's pretty good about helping - I mean he likes to wipe dishes: that's easy, and we have good times together doing the dishes...." "But that tower - all those huge rocks, Robin! How did you ever roll them all up - alone - and build them together, one on top of another - if you don't like doing things?"

"Oh, Una wanted it," he answered. His voice always has a light, low tone of surface in it - something slightly humorous and unserious, yet always, always kind. His eyes, though are deeper than the sea and clearly profound. If one meets his eyes for more than a glance, there is something active in their effect upon one. Something painfully alive and raw comes out of his eyes, like an unknown ray that burns the mists one covers oneself with. Mercifully, he quickly slides them from one's own, and this is a relief.

His eyes must carry both radiant and awful messages to his brain all the time; and one has the feeling that he sees All, whatever that is. Like God's eyes in the Bible. Knowing that much, knowing all around everything, seeing whole, so to speak, leaves him uncritical; and without judging anyone, he neither likes nor dislikes them much.

...I that am stationed, and cold at heart, incapable of burning,
My blood like standing sea-water lapped in a stone pool, my desire to
the rock, how can I speak of you?
Mine will go down to the deep rock?

His living seems to go along way, from the top level that most of us live on, straight on down to Profundis – also up into the mysterious regions above us. Una palpably keeps him on the surface. Through her he moves, he eats, exercises, shaves, procreates, and smiles his kind, beautiful smile upon almost everyone. Through the twins, who are the projection of herself and him and inseparable from either of them in their own minds, Robin also lives.

At some early moment (or was it gradually?) Una took over the

responsibility of his earthly life, he gladly giving it into her hands. Unless she lives, he doesn't live: that is, on this, her earth. In the deepest sense, Una, then, has saved him. I don't mean in the obvious way, although she did that, too, when she took him and checked the drinking and plotted a life for him, making him keep to a pattern. I mean she has absolved him from human suffering, from the ambivalent destiny of those who live their own lives. She has lifted him beyond pleasure and pain: he is safe.

He doesn't participate in the accidental fortunes of daily life; he is unidentified with it save through Una - and it is his strangely good fortune that she caught the wild hawk before it beat its life out against the rocks.

...(I have granite and cypress, Both long-lasting,
Planted in the earth; but the granite sea-boulders are prey to no hawk's wing, they have taken
worse pounding,
Like me they remember
Old wars and are quiet; for we think that the future is one piece with
The past, we wonder why tree-tops
And people are so shaken.

No one could be better than Una to be identified with. She has the luck that comes more from a fine common sense and balance, than from the indulgent gods. She is so well organized, that things come right for her; so completely herself, that everything she does is successfully done. Perhaps the gods gave her the genius for living well. Steff says it doesn't matter what one does, so long as one thinks right. Una thinks right, apparently, and all her acts follow, obediently melodious.

That stone house Robin built and the massive square tower next to it – they are absolutely so hand-made, every rock is known

..my fingers had the art
To make stone love stone, you will find some remnant...

personally to Robin, just as every inch inside them are [sic] known intimately to Una: she has dusted and polished over them so for years.

Think of the power Robin has put into them: if it could be weighed and measured, the figures would seem super-human! The great stones moved and edged up from his shore, inch by inch, a few inches at a time; up the cliff and over the road-and then lifted by block and tackle, slowly (every

hairbreadth measured first) up into place, until the tower rose massive, to endure forever: longer, far longer than Una and Robin or Garth and Donnan-as long as those prototypes, the hawk and the unicorn -God only knows how long!

Stone-cutters fighting time with marble, you fore defeated
Challengers of oblivion
Eat cynical earnings, knowing rock splits, records fall down,
The square-limbed Roman letters
Scale in the thaws, wear in the rain. The poet as well
Builds his monument mockingly;
For man will be blotted out, the blithe earth die, the brave sun
Die blind, his heart blackening:
Yet stones have stood for a thousand years, and pained thoughts found
The honey peace in old poems.

And not content with house and square tower, Una must have a round tower, too, hard by – so the new rock pile grows larger: Robin is collecting for that now. And it is not subterfuge, either. Una makes him roll the rocks and build for her. She knows it is good for him, of course, but it isn't only that. What fun would that be? No, she loves her house, she loves her tower; she wanted them and he made them for her.

Up in the upper room of the tower, Una sometimes sits at her little organ and sings old ballads ... while the fire burns in the chimney place and the wild storm beats against the undomesticated rocks of the shore below. Little Una, twinkling and flashing, whole-souled, secure against the world in her stone tower, sweetly singing ballads about another older life that is romantic and real like hers – that treasure must be a payment more than enough for Robin.

I think to see her gold and silver head against the background of his rocks, animating them, is never stale for Robin. Her fabulous braids are wound round her head so meekly, making it round, giving the Madonna contour; and her small face is Irish - sweet and fierce by turns. Indomitable. In that creamy skin, no color except such blue, deep blue eyes, and sometimes the faintest pink in her cheeks.

And Una has another little organ in the living room of the house, too! She snatches moments to play upon it. She does a whole morning's washing for her three – all those shirts and things – and hangs them out in the sun; and then sits down and plays a tune. Not breathlessly or hurriedly: she can change her tempo in a flash from the bustling, practical rush into the perfect leisure. Never mechanical, she is always adjusted. It

is an anomaly that generally, when human beings are adjusted, they are more mechanical than machines! Automatic. Una never is. She is too conscious for that – never missing anything. Everything counts with her – has a meaning - is valuable or hateful. She can cope better than anyone I ever knew – liking it!

It is morning. Una washes out the clothes and hangs them on the line in dozens. She steps briskly about, with emphatic, small steps. Her feet look childish in her low shoes, and her legs look innocent. She is dressed in a black cotton dress with a round neck and her arms are bare.

Robin is back upstairs in their bedroom. He is pacing up and down. He has been the one down first of them all, to put the coffee on the stove. After breakfast, those great handsome boys - more about them later - have been steered off to school.

"Now, dear, you'd better get upstairs," Una says. Robin is always held a little below the surface in the morning, and Una leaves him to it. He isn't taciturn - he is dazed to the outer world. His pulse beats slowly, and his eyes seem to see inwards. He is aware of his three, and would be responsive if they wanted him. He would always give up poetry for life-his life. He would rather drive the boys to school than write a poem - thinking life more valuable than its reflection; but Una won't have it. "Now go upstairs, Robin," Una says, briskly.

He carries that pipe; he stoops a little, preparing to miss the place where the upper floor juts over the little stairs. The proportions of the house are all made for Una; Robin is tall and made like a hawk. Why can one never get away from that idea of him being like a hawk? Why -when his face is so sensitively harmonious and ready to smile, kind, tender and aloof - why does one feel the broken hawk somewhere in him? Where in him? Robin does not seem to suffer-being beyond good and evil fortune. But there's often a stoop in his body. Is it because he has bent himself against the heavy rocks?

Mornings, then, Robin works upstairs. No familiar house-noises disturb him. Una's rattling and polishing only bind him more securely in that concentration where he probes. Voices mingled with Una's do not cut through. We laugh hilariously, recounting the gossip, the fun of things. Una adores news. The last bit.

"I have something I must tell you!"

"Oh, what?" she will exclaim greedily, her blue eyes twinkling and flashing. She rubs honey-and-almond cream on her hands, for she has just dried them. A hundred times a day Una rubs honey-and-almond cream rapidly on her hands.

"Well, you know...."

Robin is pacing slowly up and down above our heads. The boards in the floor creak and that pipe smoke... ! He never budes from his post above. Oh, yes! The little ancient bantams outside, that belong to the boys, are squawking and making an awful fuss all of a sudden. Una and I scarcely notice them, but Robin slowly lowers himself down the little steep staircase. One sees his long foot come first in its battered leather gaiter, then his great angular hand on the stair rail, finally his head, bent to miss the ceiling. Haggard, a kind of pallor over his granite features, the deepcreased right cheek washed wanly with a smile, he says gently:

"Something seems to be making trouble for the little cocks."

Una jumps up, then, with a look of rage and flies to the door- so fast that she is there without moving through the air.

"It's that cat!" she will announce in a little, growling voice. Robin laughs, softly. He is always amused by Una, always aware. Why not? For he lives through her. She is his conduit, his battery; she brings him life. More than that, she is his lightning conductor; she keeps the destroyer away, absorbing evil for him, making it harmless.

He always goes back upstairs. All his mornings are there. That is the time given him to go away from the life of every day, away from the happy home and Una. Yet not away, for he takes her with him, somewhere in him, and she brings him back again. She is his life-line in the deep sea of human suffering.

She goes with him. He does not have to go alone into those hearts, into the cells of the sorrowful, stupid, and predestined mortals that he tells about in his poems. She has collected stories of the coast for him from farmers and sailors and roadmen and all kinds of people. Just the stories. She has given him the framework of those lives, in a way, just as she has given him the framework of his own life. But that's all. She never intrudes a step into the life of his creative work. She never talks about what he is doing at any moment, nor does he tell her. She leaves him alone with it. When a thing is finished, he brings it to her, but not till it is finished. She must often wonder what is going on, but she never speaks of her wonder. She sends him upstairs there into their bedroom - and then leaves him to it.

Robin is thinner and more gaunt when he comes down at one o'clock There is a wan-ness over his cheeks and the deep clefts in the rocky face are deeper. His eyes are deep as eyes can be, and more deep than is comfortable. He has been looking into lives. Looking into individual lives.

Robin knows the destiny of every individual life is tragic – must be so, leading inevitably to old age, disease and death; and that the passage towards old age is tragic when any individual wish seeks its end. It isn't that Robin holds any brief for collective living: he has gone a long, long way beyond collectivity. He just knows something Una knows about love. Something he hasn't written about yet.

And he knows there is just so much to endure. It is an though there is a given amount of human – no – living suffering to every square foot of this earth. Often married people feel this unconsciously. There is some unhappiness in the air – if one of them takes it, the other goes free. I once knew a man and his wife who had a mysterious illness which they shared. When one of them had it, the other went free. Robin knows about this kind of thing, and does his magic in the upstairs room. He says:

This coast crying out for tragedy like all beautiful places: and like the
passionate spirit of humanity
Pain for its bread: God's, many victims', the painful deaths, the horrible transfigurations: I said in
my heart,
'Better invent than suffer: imagine victims
Lest your own flesh be chosen the agonist, or you
Martyr some creature to the beauty of the place.' And I said, 'Burn sacrifices once a year to magic
Horror away from the house, this little house here
You have built over the ocean with your own hands
Beside the standing boulders: for what are we,
The beast that walks upright, with speaking lips
And little hair, to think we should always be fed,
Sheltered, intact, and self-control led? We sooner more liable
Than the other animals. Pain and terror, the insanities of desire;
not accidents but essential,
And crowd up from the core:' I imagined victims for those wolves,
I made them phantoms to follow,
They have hunted the phantoms and missed the house. It is not good
to forget over what gulfs the spirit
Of the beauty of humanity, the petal of a lost flower blown seaward
by the night-wind, floats to its quietness .⁶

He takes it for them all-for his three – in his poems. It is not just writing poetry that Robin does up there. He is living it out- bringing it up and out of himself for beyond himself – canceling their portion for

Una and Donnan and Garth. That is why his things are so poignant. They are not just written - they are endured.

Experiencing the human tragedy consciously and voluntarily, and building it into solid blocks of poetry, is an atonement for his own three; but it is more than that. It is for all - for any of us. It saves all of us. No one can read Robin's poetry and be just the same afterwards. One could be saved from those sins and sorrows by reading of them as he writes. Bringing into consciousness and clear understanding, the distracting terrors and troubles of life, he dissipates them. What a task for one man!

Joy is a trick in the air; pleasure is merely contemptible, the dangled
Carrot the ass follows to market or precipice;
But liminary pain - the rock under the tower and the hewn coping
That takes thunder at the head of the turret -
Terrible and real. Therefore a mindless dervish carving himself
With knives will seem to have conquered the world.
The world's God is treacherous and full of unreason; a torturer, but also
The only foundation and the only fountain.
Who fights with him eats his own flesh and perishes of hunger;
 who hides in the grave
To escape him is dead; who enters the Indian
Recession to escape him is dead; who falls in love with the God
 is washed clean
Of death desired and of death dreaded.
He has joy, but joy is a trick in the air; and pleasure,
 but pleasure is contemptible;
And peace; and is based on solider than pain.
He has broken boundaries a little and that will estrange him;
 he is monstrous, but not
To the measure of the God ... But I having told you -
However I suppose that few in the world have energy to hear effectively --
Have paid my birth-dues; am quits with the people.⁷

And all around this magical spot, how the gossips conjecture! Of course people have always had their eyes on Una and Robin, for nothing is so fascinating as those who seem to know how to live their own lives.

It must have started years ago when the crash and break-up of Una's marriage with Teddy occurred, for that was noisy and painful and public because Teddy couldn't help making it so. Teddy thought she was happily married because he was. He adored her, but he didn't studiously observe

her. He is not contemplative at any time and, anyway, he was almost always away from her, occupied in being a lawyer – a quite a successful lawyer

At night he talked to her. His brief and unconcentrated lovemaking left Una baffled. She, who is passionately interested in process and in the detail of creation, would possibly have made Teddy into a famous lawyer, counseling him with her urgent, dynamic interest in him and his work – had he first satisfied her first need for satisfaction. People have to get their bodies out of the way before they can accomplish anything. If they don't, the unquiet flesh obstructs every path and chokes all channels: becomes threatening and clamorous and, if defeated too long, brings real disaster. It is the misfortune of American men that they live so far outside themselves in their ambitions and activities, that they are rarely good lovers. Their minds are apt to wander, and perhaps that was the secret of this failure.

Una didn't know what the matter was. There she was in Los Angeles, in a nice street, in a pretty house, comfortable, as comfortable as all the other women around her, well dressed, living a pleasant, if somewhat smug, California life. But there seemed to be no color to it, no flavor. She felt no color or flavor in herself, either; but as though she were a peach in a basket with rows of other peaches, nice to look at, but without any taste.

She was restless and unhappy. She played golf – miles of golf, and she drove in automobile endurance tests; but still her energy outlasted her expenditure of it. She made friends at this time that enriched her soul and that opened up the sensitive, aesthetic side of life to her, an interest in art became one of the wistful substitutes for love.

Her spirit broadened, overflowing wider fields of earthly interest, because the narrow, insufferable river of light was dammed up in her. But these second-choice remedies only developed her, and that was not enough for Una. Education, as an end in life, may be enough for some inhibited women, but not for such as she.

Of course she knew nothing, herself, at this time, of the pattern she wove. Only her instinct knew how to find its way out. It was while she sought for still more education, that, ironically, she found love. She decided to take a college course to see if it would help. It did. She met Robin there.

She was arrested by the look of the handsome boy who lingered on the stairways, disoriented and lost in the crowd of well-directed young people. His face was unlighted and his eyes were blind, but he had great beauty. Una had to have him, and she knew this immediately. She went like an to take a college course to see if it would help. It did. She met Robin there. She was arrested by the look of the handsome boy who lingered on the stairways, disoriented and lost in the crowd of well-directed young people. His face was unlighted and his eyes were blind, but he had great beauty. Una had to have him, and she knew this immediately. She went like an

arrow to the heart of that hollow oak, and their long saga commenced.

Robin had written a few things before he met Una, but it was only after they came together that his great poems came out of him. It seemed as though each was the sole, inimitable channel for the other, of all the creatures on earth. Robin, locked in Avernus turned out to the world with messages - Una carrying them in her firm hands; and she, the lover of process and object, of efficiency and excellence, turned inward to meet Robin. Lovelessness may be educative and developing to character, but love is living. The philosophy of Becoming is the hope of those who are not: Being is the rare experience, and that is what Una and Robin attained to through each other.

Upon the outer circumference of this reality, was Teddy: Teddy the lawyer, with suspicions but no certainties. But he had to know, of course, so three detectives were about and about and about and those lovers never knew it until Una faced the piles of papers on Teddy's desk: circumstantial, incontrovertible. Their interpretation was as may be expected. They saw her "in the toils." They described her in the grasp of "that drunken beast."

Robin did drink. That didn't matter to Una. Nothing did. Instinctively, she knew it didn't matter, once she got him to herself. She who could win in those other endurance tests, would win in this one.

But Teddy couldn't give her up. He thought it was because he couldn't give her up to be harmed by that worthless drunkard, that it was his duty to keep her safe. But how few people ever face the hard truth? Just as well for them, perhaps, they don't; human calibre is seldom made to endure it.

Una sorrowfully saw through Teddy and pitied him, so she agreed to go away for a year and see what it would happen in that length of time. She went – not knowing whether Robin would wait for her, whether he would disintegrate and fade out before she got back to make him into something solid. For she always looked at things squarely. She knew the danger and didn't shrink from it. She had to be that fair to Teddy - that a year would test them out.

She knew she could handle Robin if she had him near, but she didn't know whether she could at a distance. She still doesn't know that misdoubts it, in fact. She knows she is the little god in the machine – she likes that. Doesn't she wish she had a great, dangerous, humming aeroplane to drive?

She went to Europe, then, but not to repine. No, Una is not that kind of. She is too valiant, too robust to brood too outward-moving and interested. Led in life to torture herself with the thought of uncertainty, no matter how uncertain the outcome. She and Robin had promised they would not even

write each other. So she knew nothing except what she hoped.

I think she set her head back and compressed her pretty mouth and looked fierce with her black-lashed, blue Irish eyes, and said to herself she would get Robin, no matter what happened, so long as he didn't drink himself to death before she got back to him. If another woman got him, as might be, it wouldn't make any difference: she could get him back from anyone. Just so he stayed alive – that was all that mattered.

In the year and a half they had of each other, Robin had set her on her feet forever. He, with no balance of his own, had given her her perfect equilibrium. She could enjoy herself now in Europe – and she proceeded to do so.

She loved it all whole-souledly, primarily because she loved Robin and he had set her free to love the world. She had fun. She went about alone in Italy and France, assimilating it, bringing back vestiges in prints of Botticelli's painting that would be pinned upon the redwood wall of Tor House and grow faint with the years. Botticelli women who looked like Una: round-headed and wide-eyed with wonder and delight.

But Ireland set its deepest mark on her, making her feel her blood and its race. And the towers of the old country – she adored them. She belonged to them and they to her. She felt like a tower woman. She felt an affinity with the women in wild ballads who leaned from stone towers over tossing seas....

She had promised a year, but after seven months, rumors came to her that Teddy was forgetting his sorrow with some other girl, and this seemed to absolve her; so she hurried home to find Robin.

When she came, she had the spiritual strength of ten men and the look of a dove. Teddy asked her if she still wanted a divorce, and she said, "Yes!" with the decisive finality, the little determined, willful, upward inflection that is always in her voice, that has always been in it since Robin had set her free by giving her what she wanted at every moment since then. She is never uncertain. And whatever she wants is right. Her wishes are set for constructing. She cannot wish wrong.

It was sad that Teddy had to lose Una that Robin and Una should find themselves, but so it was. Teddy has lost his way in life without Una. Over the way, across the wild grasses, he lights an unshaded beacon in the window that faces hers. Perhaps he believes he does it for Una, that she will know he is there if she ever needs him; for he cannot believe that Robin is anything calculable and sure even now. But it is really for himself he sets the light there ... burning towards her at one side from the glad steam of her own and Robin's quiet, unalterable blaze. His small ray set



Photo by Sadie Adriani

Robinson Jeffers

towards her, gives him his only feeling of identification with real life-except Colin, perhaps, these last two years. And it is a fancy of mine that he somehow figures that Colin is Una's more than Gay's.

Robin had waited for Una, quietly drinking, gently, in a lost kind of way, with a look of unknowing on his face. She didn't mind that. They went to live together in the north, Una waiting for the divorce, and they drank a good deal, for she liked to drink herself. She had no plan of life yet - only to love Robin and live with him and talk and talk, to tell him everything, carry everything to him, to fill him with the life she saw, filtering it through her glad and fascinated attention.

She adored the passionate and terrible business of living, the strangeness, the macabre, wild horror of frustrated love, now that she enjoyed completion; and nothing was too slight to engage her vivid interest, so long as it had an edge of keenness, a flavor, or a bit of zest. She roved over the intricate earth hunting out her feed, carrying home to Robin the morsels of story, the devious and peculiar beauties of humans, their pitiful escapes, or their glad, victorious arrivals. She filled Robin, who was waiting to be filled. He tucked away, deep in him, all

the fragments that he would never have gone out to secure himself, not being a hunter like Una. After a while, they went to Carmel and lived in a tiny log cabin among pine trees, unneighbored but not, I fear, unnoticed. People had been talking about them ever since the scandalous front page paragraphs in newspapers had interpreted in their own way the happenings of this divinely guided pair. A great inhibition sometimes leads to great accomplishments, but this time it led to great love, and the poetry was a byproduct of that.

The newspapers did not tell a thing about it at the time. Since poetry in bulk brings with it its own respectable protection when it comes along in book after book, the world, so loving and admiring what it can heft and

handle, waited till the shelf began to fill before its press took up the tale in reverential form - delicately alluding to the secluded couple in the rock-walled house on the Point; the shy, sheltered poet, "America's greatest Poet," living in the happiest security of wedlock; the observed, magnetic, focal spot of all Carmel - nay, of this whole coast - the emphasis now all on the volume, the output, the scandalousness submerged beneath the product that is but a reflection of the passion that made it flame.

In the log cabin, Una did all her housework. Teddy, in a last letter of farewell, had exhorted her to Work! To write or paint and fulfill the promise she gave out in her personality of being able to Do Something. He begged her to be a Great Woman and produce something beautiful "like the Great Woman in the plays and books." But Una and Robin only had a little money. She wanted to spend what they could on books and music instead of on servants, so she washed and swept from the beginning, and she has always done so.

And when Tor House was built and the tower - she kept on with it. Her Work has been wrought in human clay, and she has fired the shapes in the furnace of her own body. Oh, she has produced, but not as Teddy foresaw it for her.

It was not long before she began to check the drinking. Not for any puritanical reason, rather for efficiency of living, so the alcohol self-distilled in the cells would have its chance to better stimulate their perceptions and their gladness.

It was not accomplished all at once. One morning, when she woke up, Robin was not at her side. She was alone in the little house. Everything was silent, and no sound was to be heard except the rumor in the pines and the slow roll of the great sea below her. She was in a terror as she dressed hurriedly and ran out seeking him. Never a sign of him about, though, and hours went by while she experienced the terrible arrested and suspended

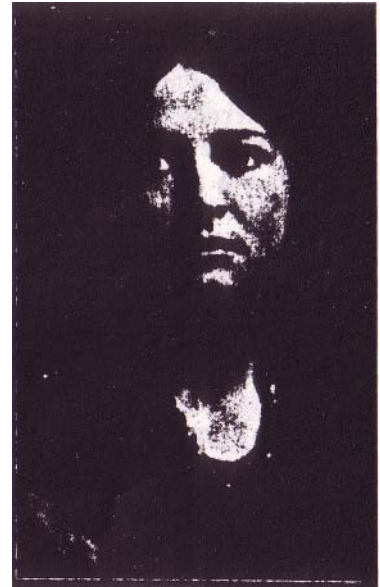


Photo by Arnold Genthe

Una Jeffers

life of a suddenly emptied house. She couldn't imagine where he could be, who never left her side. They had grown so bound together, they were like two even halves joined perfectly. Distraction rose in her....

Finally it came. He had risen in the dark and walked to Monterey and bought a bottle of whiskey and drank it all!

But it was the only time. Her anger and her grief prevented any recurrence of such solitary indulgence; and Robin learned that he could not hurt her, for when she suffered, he had to feel her pain for her. When anything troubles Una, it grieves Robin more than it does her. I do not think she can ever feel as deeply as Robin feels for her.

Once I lived near them in the house next to Teddie's [sic] and one morning I looked out the west window and saw Una running wildly across the open space between our house and his. Her long braids swung out behind her and her legs were bare below the little black cotton dress. Her face was terrible. It was like a maenad's – the mouth open with horror, shaped for a shout, but no sound coming from it, and her eyes were black and seeing tragedy ahead of her.

She disappeared like an apparition wiped out. I thought of Robin, of Garth and Donnan. Something awful must have happened. Soon I went over to Tor House, though I scarcely dared, for fear of what I would find there.

Una was weeping on her knees in the courtyard, bending over Porthos, one of the tiny little bronze bantam cocks. Her long braids trailed in the dusty sand. Robin stood above her, his face whiter than ashes, frozen with pain, silent, drooping over her. When I came, he raised his eyes toward me, slowly, with the curious effect of furtiveness he gives, because his motions are so gradual and stealthy. Garth and Donnan stood there, too, with tent heads and uncomfortable faces that were too young and too unaccustomed to suffering to rightly express it. Una seemed not to see me. The little cock lay on its side, panting a little, and her hands hovered over it.

"Una's precious!" she sobbed, "Una's little precious!" It seemed to know her, and it rolled its glazing eye up at her.

"What is it, Robin?" I asked, breathlessly. It seemed to me I couldn't stand the anguish bunched there in that group.

"The neighbor's dog caught it and ran off down the hill," he answered in his light, low-toned voice, devoid of feeling. His eyes returned to Una: they were dark and aghast at the sight of her. "God *damn* it!" She sobbed. "Damn it! Damn it! I'll *shoot* it!" and then:

"He's dying," she sobbed. I waited a moment and then I left them. I was all outside what was going on, and could do nothing to help.

I knew how Una had gentled those little things. Someone had given them to the boys when they were chicks, nine years before; and they ran in and out of the house like familiars. One, just that one it had to be, would sit on Una's lap and when she talked to him, cajoling him, he would put up his little head and crow along, proud cock-a-doodle-do in a thin n, piping voice that broke like an old man's.

"That's the man!" Una would cry, hugging him, "That's Una's darling man!"

After awhile, I went back to Tor House in my car, to try and take her away from there for awhile, and she went with me, leaving Robin and the boys to watch over the cock which they had moved into the house. He was breathing fainter and fainter now. Una's eyes were red, but she wasn't weeping anymore. When she came with me, Robin walked to the car with us and gave her a long, slow, clinging kiss. He looked twenty years older and one saw how he would be as an old man.

We drove up to the Highlands and never spoke of what had happened – just went to see some friends and laughed and talked of other things. And when we went back to the Point, and Robin came out of the house, Una saw the bird was dead, for his face was full of it and the dread of telling her.

She said, "Oh, *dear!*" In an impatient tone, as though she had dropped an egg and broken it, for she had been through the worst already. She doesn't repine – and, anyway, perhaps Robin had taken the hang of it for her. He was a little sick from what he had witnesses, and could not eat or work for a day or two, but the boys buried it with some ceremoniousness, and got comfort from that, enjoying it.

They were alone in the little log house, except for an adored white bulldog called Billie. Una practiced maternal love upon Billie and longed for twins. She carried the thought of twin boys around with her so constantly, that she could hardly believe it when the little girl was born She only 1 lived a few hours. Did she know she had come to the wrong house, and so slipped away?

Down at the edge of the sea upon the naked Point where the rocky shore projects, Robin and Una walked together and planned their lifelong, age-long house; and finally they bought their strip of land and Robin began to slowly roll the rocks up the declivity; so slowly, with what patience and unchanging intention, he fitted the great stones together, making rooms. No slipshod work in that, nothing soft; a granite hardness in the man Teddy had called but a year or two before, "the vile poetaster"!

...and we all applaud our vices.
Mine, coldness and the tenor of a stone tranquility; slow life,
the growth of trees and verse,
Content the unagitable and somewhat earthfast nature.

He knew there was in him a slow, deep rhythm, perpetual and unfaltering like the sea, motivated by the round, observing moon. Their life was elemental, and it was as though they were truly aspects of the universal forces, as dependable as they are, and living under the Safe Law that governs them.

Robin made the deep-embrasured windows that would look out to sea.... Una thought of the twins growing up in the wide west window-seat, eating at the little table and learning their lessons there: after awhile they were. That is wonderful, but not so wonderful when one realizes the harmony in that woman, so constituted that she longs only for the things that are coming to her!

In this low-ceilinged living room, Una pasted the Botticelli prints onto the redwood panels. From the end wall, the round gaze of Venus rising from the sea covered the room; and someone painted a profile of Robin that Una hung on the wall near, so it seemed to be watching her. just as he does in life.

In that room, where so often people come and go, flooding in, inevitably attracted there by the charm of it, the glamour of happiness; where Una's orange wine, perpetually brewing in the kitchen, is continually being sipped by guests who turn little glasses to the light and exclaim over the amber clearness – Robin sits hardly speaking, his pipe held poised in the air by that great bony hand that the rocks have shaped and hardened and never broken. His eyes are always on Una's face – clinging to it. Does she steady him, and hold him to the level of the surface? Sometimes he has a drowning look in his eyes – but never when they are on Una's face.

In such security, there is no need to be careful of love, no studied politeness or conscious good behavior. That would not be real enough to suit such practical lovers. I remember the very first time I was in there for tea, when Steff took Tony and me. Una always makes fresh gingerbread for a tea party, and she cut everyone a slice and slid it onto our plates. That happened to be the day when she had turned out the room, polished the floor and swept the rugs until they were fresh and bright – and she adores the look of it after she has livened it up by hard work. We ate and drank and laughed, and Robin glued his eyes on Una's face and fumbled his gingerbread so that a lot of crumbs and powdered sugar fell on the floor in front of him. When Una saw that, her rage rose in her and, giving him a

look as though she could kill him, she ran into the kitchen and came back with a dust pan and rapidly brushed up the debris, talking all the time about something, going on with the party, doing two things at once - Robin doing only one: looking sorry.

In the room beside the living room, Robin built the bedroom where the wide window looks out to sea, and the bridal bed stands in it where they have loved together for so long and where he says he will die with the western sun shining in his eyes over the sea.

I chose the bed downstairs by the sea-window for a good death-bed
When we built the house; it is ready waiting,
Unused unless by some guest in a twelvemonth, who hardly suspects
Its latter purpose. I often regard it,
With neither dislike nor desire; rather with both, so equalled
That they kill each other and a crystalline interest
Remains alone. We are safe to finish what we have to finish;
And then it will sound rather like music
When the patient daemon behind the screen of sea-rock and sky
Thumps with his staff, and calls thrice: "Come Jeffers."

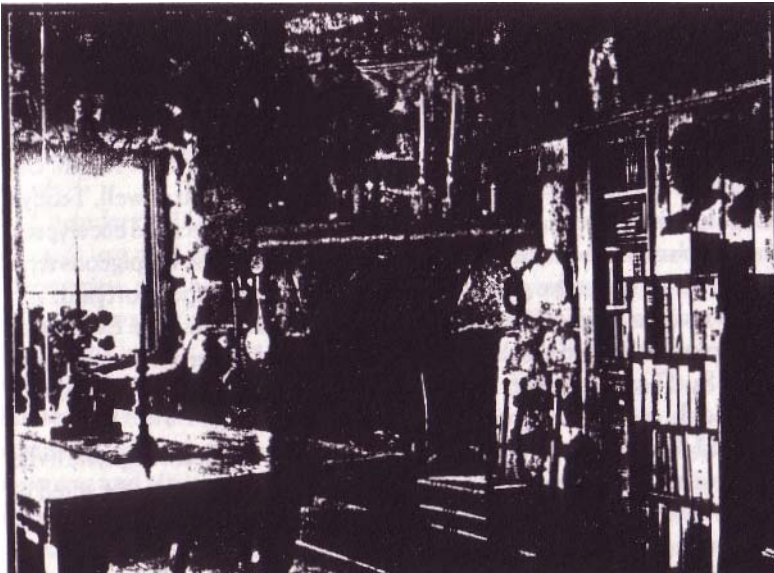


Photo by Horace Lyon

The Jeffers' dining room in Tor House.

Upstairs, in the long room, the twins have slept for years; and Robin and Una have slept there, too, at the other end. But the evenings before the fire, the late night coming on them after all their talk, have ended in the "bridal bed" next door, before they mounted the steep, small stairway.

The books keep coming into that house: people always sending them, Una buying them when she can; books of biography, books particularly about Ireland – that Robin loves as well as she does, maybe because she does – yet they do not swamp the house, for she gives them away to people, to the Library, buys many – especially books of verse!

They ate for years in the living room beside the fire, until Robin later added the beautiful dining room with the inner and outer walls of stone and a wide stone fireplace. In the little balcony at one end of this room, Una's Grandmother's spinning wheel came to rest; and below, her small spinet stands. Over the fireplace, he carved the words:

"Carpent poma nepotes." (Let the grandchildren gather the apples)

And at the edge of the balcony:

"Time and I against any Two" and also "No noise, no strife nor strife swear at all, but all be decent in the hall."

When this Tor House came into being, what did Teddy do but join their neighborhood, buy the adjoining land, and raise a stone house, too. Maybe not realizing it, he built a bigger and better one than Robin. But while Robin's house fits the ground; Una and he studied it so well, Teddy's house looms a trifle high. The trees Robin planted, cedars and eucalyptus cluster round his house, holding it in their embrace; the fat pigeons strut up and down upon the grey stones of the wall around the courtyard, and the bantam cocks dart in and out under the low dark branches. Every inch of the place is known and lived in and adored by the four who are at home there. But Teddy's house, handsomer perhaps, does not have the handmade look. He has not put so much of himself into it.

Teddy built a beautiful theatre and called it the Golden Bough; he lived in the versions of love and life conjured up by the dramatists. He acted in plays whenever he could, at least he directed them, living through his cast in the roles he loved.

He built then, stonehouse and Golden Bough theatre, and in the town he built fairy-tale cottages, fantastic and amusing enough.

Una surely helped him all she could. She is fond of him. She helped the

wives who came and went. One girl she settled in Teddy's upper chamber at a loom, fancying the child could like to sit there weaving a little atmosphere around herself in quietness, looking up the hill towards the town where Teddy labored to reproduce the illusion of love and poetry in the Golden Bough Theatre. The poor girl simply hated it! She wasn't that kind at all!

The last wife is Gay. She fares better than the others, now the friendly little Colin has come the three of them are happy together. And Una runs in and out and gives them counsel.

Robin yearns over Teddy somewhat, is fond of him, wants to do things for him, but doesn't know what. He chides Una when she scolds Teddy too much, as she does sometimes, for he is thoughtless and hasty at moments, scattered, abstracted in his preoccupations with plays, full of ideas and excitement over parts, training others to fill the great roles. The house across the moor is part of Una's life and always will be. Back and forth through the long grasses she runs every day. She has fun with Gay too, they laughing together over Teddy's exploits.

Most women with the pressure on them that Una had, and increasingly has, would look harried and anxious, with frowns on the forehead and down-turned lips. But not she. I believe that every year she looks more grey with time, her face becomes more and more fulfilled, brimming with fulfillment until it would seem that every breath she draws is satisfaction and content to her. The lines that are coming to mark her features now, are from her frequent laughter: "happiness lines," Tony called them – about the rarest things in the world in women's faces, more often seen in men's.

Consider the lilies of the field and then consider Una and what she goes through in a day! In the past, like now, all the housework, and taking care of the twins, nursing them both, washing them, changing diapers, adoring them and watching over them like a lioness, getting up a hundred times a night to look at them and see if they were still alive, still breathing; watching over Robin, edging him away from drink, making him build houses and towers of stone for her, having to give him his task every day: requiring poetry, making him work, sending him to his double work morning and afternoon, above to the long, low upper room and then out upon the seashore.

And gardening: making things grow around the house and the tower, making Robin plant hundreds and hundreds of little trees, then getting them watered keeping them going. And sewing! Making her little black house-dresses, and the boys' little things. Mending all those masculine

clothes; shirts growing larger every year, socks growing larger and all needing mending! Washing and polishing windows so they always shine. Washing the car once a month, she and Robin together. And with it all, finding time to read, time to write letters, for there are people all over the world who love her and have to hear from her every once in awhile. Besides, she takes care of all the business correspondence, and it growing heavier every year, with Robin's fame flowing into every crack and crevice of the earth. Or else, when inevitable, she insists upon his writing a letter, and getting him to do that is harder than turning out fifty herself.

Then the marketing! Going up to the village to shop at Espindola's, to bring it back in the car, saving a little this way, seeing people, everyone stopping her to tell her things. She is so eager for news, things to tell Robin – gossip – interesting things. And later seeing people at home when the "Not at Home" sign is turned on the gate into the "At Home After Four O'clock" one!

Una is like those tremendous men of affairs who do the work of a dozen, yet always have time for everything. She rarely gets to hustling, like more automatic people. She goes fast, but deliberately, like something highly geared.

The twins, Garth and Donnan, have grown into big boys now, one dark and Celtic the other a Saxon blond. Every morning they must be motored to Monterey High School, carrying the lunch Una has put up for them; then they must be called for in Carmel when the bus brings them over at four o'clock. They begin to take Robin into the village now, more than he went in the past, for sometimes he goes to fetch them in the car, if Una wants to do something else. Before that, Robin's rare visits to Carmel were to the barber, for somehow Una drew the line at cutting his hair for him, no matter how he loathed going into town to have it done, having to meet people, having them stop and talk, cooing over him smiling at him he not interested or able to flow out to them, not having any personality built up to meet them with, no armour and no defense, being so kind and understanding them all too well.

Robin lives just as fully as Una, only he lives in her and in the sea and in the rocks, loving the sea-birds and the ships a little distant from him, feeling fondly toward the doves and the little cocks. Garth and Donnan and Una are enough people for Robin, and all he needs. He loves to read out loud to them in the evening while Una sews.

And the boys love to lie on the bridal bed in the cosy bedroom, with Una at its foot sewing beside the lamp and Robin reading. He has read all the great books to them this way, through the years, and talked of

everything with them, so that love and lust and all the facts of life have come to them from Robin's reading and their talk about it. Shielded forever from meeting bad news about living or the danger of shock.

Just as Una has always told Robin what to do, so she has told Garth and Donnan. She has always made their life seem so thrilling at Tor House, Robin's ways so dear and strange and acceptable, that they would rather be home than anywhere else. She loves them so – never forgetting them, never letting her attention and her love lapse down in her to be taken for granted, caressing them, hugging them, laughing and questioning them always – she surrounds them with an adorable warmth and stimulation more binding than anything they ever meet at school or in any other house. They see life through Una's eyes and their life seen by her is the loveliest pattern – and not insipid, either. She does not make it merely sweet, but brings danger into it, for glamor: locking all the doors at night, heart leaping at strange sounds, robbers in the night, curious shapes beside the tower.

Waking, they saw her rise, once, in the darkness and creep with the revolver that is by her bed, to go down the stairs; and they heard a careful footstep feeling its way from the bottom up towards her - and then her breathless cry,

"Oh, Robin, I would have shot you!"

"And would you have shot Mother, Father?"

"*Certainly!*" came the answer, firmly, out of the darkness, and the sound of the eternal kiss. "If your mother *will* live in a Scotch ballad, boys, she must take the consequences," Robin's low voice continued from the shadowy west comer under the eaves.

"Oh, Robin!" Una loved to quake and experience the terror, and make a half-real fear into the fun of living.

They all put all they have into their life together. There isn't any meanness, ever; no selfish jerking and pulling. The boys are devoted to each other and without envy. Everything is fair and scrupulously so; there is no end to the giving amongst all – no end to love.

Now the people who see this family, just cannot believe in it. Outside their own experience, they cannot take it simply for what it is, a happy family life. There is no end to the talk about them. Up in the Carmel Highlands and through the village, up the coast to San Francisco, down the coast to Los Angeles speculation and conjecture are exchanged while Una goes merrily on making a life they all would fain share if they only could.

Women yearn to get a chance with Robin to see what they could do with him. Failing to get at him, they even hope some woman will come

along who will succeed where they have failed. Una guards him from them all, as they believe, for her sake alone, so much as for them all. Robin has no stubborn, resistant denial in him, and when Marcella, waiting for him to pass her door, called him in and gave him a drink, he went in smoothly and easily and drank and sat with her – a little self-conscious, perhaps, but not unwilling, exactly. Una went home to Tor House for a moment before she joined the Orages and the S Steffens at Marcella's for tea after the lunch party at Steff's. Robin said:

"Marcella gave me a nice drink a little while ago."

"*Where?*" demanded Una.

"At her house I was going by and she called me in." Una saw that whole small plot in a flash, for Marcella had left Steff's before them all. She knew Marcella just wanted to see if she could get Robin the way she got so many other men: she had felt that minx thing in her. In a flash, the compact rage mounted and she ran all the way to the house nearby, in the door, through the easygoing, laughing group, to confront Marcella.

"She was as white as a sheet and her eyes simply blazed," they told me at the Highland dinner party where, months later, they were still talking about it.

"Marcella! You leave Robin alone. I won't have you doing that. Robin isn't for that kind of thing!" She put such an intensity into it, her attack was like a violent explosion. Scared the usually intrepid Marcella, who burst into tears. Una didn't care. She turned and marched through the house and back to Robin. She didn't want Robin to get mixed up in the looser strands of living, after all her work upon her pattern for his life. She didn't want it spoiled. Why should she? She knew Robin was no more invulnerable than any man should be, not being a neurotic nor impotent, not a god, nor yet a fool – but just a man. Knowing no one could take Robin's love away from her, was not enough for her realistic knowledge of human nature. She knew and knows their structure has the fragility that requires daily, hourly creating. It is not something that, once made, will endure forever. At any moment it could change, be messed up, altered and spoiled – unless she watches over it. So she stands at the door with a sword. She likes that, too!

So, naturally, women wonder and men are envious – and the talk goes on. About Garth and Donnan, too. Are they developing as they should? Has Una prevented initiative from growing? What will happen to them when they get out in the world? Should they not resist her more than they do? Assert themselves? Poor human nature, that has produced a theory that character is dependent upon friction for its growth! We may learn

from Una's picture that sons do not have to hate their mothers and fathers in order to become men! Possible it is true that there is one thing more powerful than anything else in life, that intelligent love can do the trick better than anything else.

Of course the psychologists are uncertain about Robin's complete abnegation, his absolute surrender to Una. He is apparently utterly selfless, has no personal wishes, is content to let her will rule them all. If anyone brings him a present (and people are always wanting to do things for him and give him things, feeling unconsciously grateful, perhaps, for his assumption of sin!) he instantly gives it to Una or the boys. "Father being noble," they call it.

The other day Noel called him out in the garden and gave him a bottle of old whiskey. He brought it in and, bending on one knee, smiling at one side of his mouth, he offered it to her – he who loves good whiskey so much. She took it. They both knew that was the natural way, and that they would drink it together.

There is a sadness, a low tone of tragedy, over Robin. His shoulders droop, his long green eyes are fathomless and half-closed. He is alien to the wishes and the struggles for wealth or eminence like other men. He is sometimes tired of making books, tired of the suffering in them. Were it not for Una and the boys, he would stop.

It is good for strength not to be merciful
To its own weakness, good for the deep
 urn to run over, good to explore
The peaks and the deeps, who can endure it,
Good to be hurt, who can be healed afterward:
 but you that have whetted consciousness
Too bitter an edge, too keenly daring,
So that the color of a leaf can make you
 tremble, and your own thoughts like barriers
Tear the live mind: were your bones mountains,
Your blood rivers to endure it? and all that labor of
 discipline labors to death.
Delight is exquisite, pain is more present;
You have sold the armor, you have bought shining with burning,
 one should be stronger than strength
To fight baresark in the stabbing field
In the rage of the stars: I tell you unconsciousness is the treasure,
 the tower, the fortress;

Referred to that one may live anything;
The temple and tower: poor dancer on the flints and
shards in the temple porches, turn home.

But he goes on for them. He is glad to take care of his love; never fails his responsibilities, and is practical minded about the increasing income they need. He is not given to fantasy and has no notions.

Now the Point, where they came to build when it was all empty and bare, is growing crowded with houses. Robin grows more weary of people and their cars and their lovemaking and picnics along the shore in front of Tor House. His eyes are affronted more and more by the sight of human living, when he is on his afternoon holiday among his stones and trees. He is being crowded out of his life of sea and shore where the gulls companioned him among the rocks, and is elbowed closer by the people who faces he would rather not see beside him. When he raises his eyes, they fall too often upon other eyes, avid to eat him, to swallow him up in the way of the starved. People hungry for life are attracted to the living, never knowing how dangerous this hunger of theirs can be.

And also it seems they would rather motor to the strip of shore in front of Tor House and park their cars and sit there gazing out to sea, more than any other spot on this whole coast; maybe because the Jeffers [sic] chose the best place of all, but probably more because that is Robin's view and they want to try and share his vision of it.

When Robin placed posts along the scanty grass left untrodden by motor tires along the cliff above the rocks, so separated that they made it impossible to drive onto the green, then they parked their cars in the road and went to sit and held hands or chat the afternoon away. So he added to the grey weathered strips of wood that bear the stem injunction: "No camping. No shooting. Do not leave papers or other filth. Jeffers others that say: "Closed to motorists. No trespassing by persons leaving cars on or near these property lines. JEFFERS"

So now only friends come, they thinking their cars are probably less injurious to his view of the horizon than those of strangers; and when he goes below to see whose company he has along that pure coast-line, silhouetted against the warm sky, they are apt to exclaim m: "Oh, Robin, you didn't mean *me*, did you?"

I think he winces at the encroachments upon the old privacy he had in the first years here, yet there is no one who could say he has ever been harsh or mean to intruders. Una is quicker to defend every stick and stone of theirs; and once when she was reading by the fire with her bare feet,

simply but adequately garbed in a long flannel night-gown, she heard unfamiliar noises down below, between the sounds of breaking waves, and she rushed out and vigorously attacked a couple of men who were stealing her fence-posts; and only afterwards remembered and laughed at their open-mouthed astonishment at this small woman in a rage, with bare feet and two long braids, swinging from side to side.

Of course, Una dressed for tea, with her gold seal on a black silk cord, found afterwards when the guests have gone, opening the Tor House door to late arrivals, with bare legs and small bare feet – that is quite a well-known sight! She always tears off her shoes and stockings whenever she has a chance and thinks they are going to be alone.

Bit is spite of motor cars and people, there is something that contracts the heart in the completion and the beauty of this life, removed from everything commonplace or sordid, seemingly so safe from disaster or accident. Accident is to the accidental, and these people are not susceptible to it. They know their way and go in awareness. The pattern will remain and the picture Una has made will only grow firmer as the years pass. She has brought her vision into reality and she holds it there.

The strongest element in the whole composite group is the potent nobility of Robin – at all times – wherever he is. He has the noble aspect that makes ordinary people feel abashed, but his gentle, inner, somewhat groping movement towards them tries to make them feel at ease, for he sends out a hooded message of kindness and compassion to everyone he meets.

In the features – in the great nose and lean cheeks, across the brow and about the mouth, there is a serenity and a quietness that has fire beneath it. In his eyes, when his infrequent gaze meets another's, there is the unearthly look of this earth-bound, wounded hawk, excelling in his submission to the destiny he has chosen. One finds in him the truth of the old classical formula that one must somehow find complete expression, within limitations.

I also am not innocent
Of contagion, but have spread my spirit on the deep world.
I have gotten sons and sent the fire wider.
I have planted trees, they also feel while they live.
I have humanized the ancient sea-sculptured cliff
And the ocean's wreckage of rock
Into a house and a tower,
Hastening the sure decay of granite with my hammer,

Its hard dust will make soft flesh;
And have widened in my idleness
The disastrous personality of life with poems,
That are pleasant enough in the breeding but go bitterly at last
To envy oblivion and the early deaths of nobler
Verse, and much nobler flesh;
And I have projected my spirit
Behind the superb sufficient forehead of nature
To gift the inhuman God with this rankling consciousness."

NOTES

1. "Ascent to the Sierras," *Cawdor*
2. "The Caged Eagle's Death Dream," *Cawdor*
3. "Granite and Cypress," *Roan Stallion*
4. "For House," *Cawdor*
5. "To the Stone Cutters," *Tamor*
6. "Apology for Bad Dreams," *Roan Stallion*
7. "Birth-Dues," *Dear Judas*
8. "Vices," *Roan Stallion*
9. "The Bed by the Window," *Thurso's Landing*
10. "To a Young Artist," *Cawdor*
11. "Margrave," *Thurso's Landing*

Guidelines for Submissions to the *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*

The *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter* will print short notes, notifications of work-in-progress, announcements requests for information, inquiries from collectors, bibliographic findings, etc. It especially welcomes short anecdotes relating to the poet and his works.

It has not been RJN policy to publish unsolicited poem tributes. Photos relating to Robinson Jeffers and family are most welcome and may be printed if not restricted by copyright.

Significant letters from or about the Jeffers family are equally welcome, as are drawings, maps, family-tree annotations, and reports on cultural allusions to the poet, use of his poems, and difficult-to-access articles.

Essays:

Place the title one inch below the top of the page, the author's name one inch below the title, the text two inches below the author's name. Affiliation of the contributor should appear at the end of the essay.

Notes, Book Reviews, and Bibliographies:

Follow the form for essays, except that the author's name (and affiliation) should appear at the end of the text.

References:

Consult the *MLA Style Sheet* Second Edition. Mark references in the text with raised footnote number (not author-year citations in parentheses). Double-space endnotes following the essay on a new page headed "Notes."

Quoting and Citing Robinson Jeffers:

The standard edition of Jeffers' work is now *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (Stanford University Press, Vols. I, II, 111: 1988, 1989, 1991), abbreviated CP. Of course, for peculiar purposes, the original printings may be referred to, in which case the title in full or (when repeated) appropriately abbreviated, should be cited, along with an explanatory note. Until *The Collected Letters of Robinson and Una Jeffers* (Stanford) is available, references should be to *The Selected Letters of Robinson Jeffers*, edited by Ann Ridgeway (Johns Hopkins, 1968), or to the appropriate number of the *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*.

Submit two typescripts, double-spaced on 8 1/2" x 11" standard white typing paper. To have one returned, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Address correspondence to Robert J. Brophy editor, *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*, I Department of English, California State University, Long Beach, CA 90840; (310) 985-4235 Contributors whose work is published or publishers whose book is reviewed will receive two complimentary copies of that issue of RJN.